Keeping Kids Safe on the Internet

Family Tip Sheet | Primary and Elementary School

Introduction

You've heard the stories. You know the internet can be an unsafe place. But you can't keep your child isolated from the internet forever – sooner or later your youngster is going to need to use it for learning, completing work, and social interaction. How can you protect your child from the dangers of the internet, while still allowing him or her to benefit from all the valuable tools and information to be found there? Continue reading for some helpful tips on how you can teach your child to use the internet safely.

Table Talk

Have a conversation today with your child about safe internet use.

- Talk about the importance of not giving out personal information. Describe the types of information that should be private and never shared online.
- Tell your child to let you know if something ever makes him or her feel uncomfortable or scared on the internet.
- Set some ground rules for internet use. Set boundaries for how much time your child can spend on the computer and which sites he or she is allowed to visit.

Tips & Tricks

There are things you can do to ensure your child's safety on the internet.

- **Never leave your child unsupervised on the computer.** All computers with access to the internet should be in a visible place where you can easily supervise their use and model appropriate computer use by surfing the web together.
- **Use family safety tools on the computer.** Use safety settings to limit access to inappropriate websites and activities. Check the browsing history to monitor which sites have been accessed.
- **Create a family checklist for internet rules.** Tell your child the household rules for internet use. List when and how long your child can use the computer, reminders for protecting personal information (such as avoiding chat rooms and never revealing contact information), and prohibited sites like gaming and social media sites.
- **Bookmark favorite and approved sites.** Bookmark sites you're comfortable letting your small child access and allow access only from this list.

Plan & Practice

Practice safe internet use with your child:

- On the family computer, let your child "bookmark" a couple sites—sites that your youngster enjoys and that you both agree are safe.
- Set the "block pop-up" feature to prevent inappropriate ads from popping up while your child uses the internet.
- With your child, create a moniker that he or she can use to remain anonymous on the internet. Remind your child never to give out her or his real name, address, or phone number on the internet.
- Help your child practice using appropriate internet etiquette. Be kind to others. Don't tease, insult, or put others down. Cyberbullying, stalking, and harassment are illegal.
- Ignorance is not always bliss. Periodically put your child's name through an internet search and see what comes up. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act gives parents' control over what online websites can post about children under 13 years old

Learn More

For more information on internet safety, check out the sites below:

- ***Children's Privacy, Bureau of Consumer Protection***
  http://www.business.ftc.gov/privacy-and-security/childrens-privacy

  A place to find out more about the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act.

- ***Age-based Guidelines for Kids' Internet Use***
  http://www.microsoft.com/security/family-safety/childsafety-age.aspx

  Guidance for protecting children from inappropriate content utilizing family safety settings and parental controls in Windows products, in partnership with The American Academy of Pediatricians.

- ***Protect Kids Online, OnGuardOnline.gov***
  http://www.onguardonline.gov/

  A site that provides resources for protecting kids online, including tools, tips, and information.

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